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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

12 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

Situation Report Number 29  
(As of 2230 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. The heavy fighting in the Golan Heights area died down as night fell with the Israeli forces about 12 miles inside Syrian territory. Despite numerous ground attack sorties by IAF aircraft, the Israelis were unable to achieve a decisive breakthrough on the Qunaytirah-Damascus road. There are reports that the Syrians are withdrawing tank units from the front and deploying them to a second defense line forward of Damascus. Israeli and Iraqi forces clashed within Syria during the day, but there is no information on the outcome.

2. Fighting on the Suez front was light today with probing attacks by both sides. The Egyptians continue to move men and equipment over bridges across the canal. The Egyptians are attempting to give the impression that they have extended their SAM umbrella over their forces on the east bank of the canal, and have positioned at least four dummy SAM sites on the east bank. The Israelis claim that the Egyptians are preparing for an airborne assault of the Mitla Pass, but there is no indication as yet that such an assault is impending.

MORI/CDF per C03316182

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SYRIAN FRONT

3. By the end of today's hard fighting the Israelis had penetrated about 12 miles into Syrian territory. The Israelis, however, have not managed to make a decisive breakthrough on the Qunaytirah-Damascus road, and were moving slowly in the face of Syrian resistance. Israeli aircraft delivered numerous ground attacks against Syrian positions during the course of the day, and engaged in dogfights with Syrian aircraft over the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. Israel claims to have destroyed 29 Syrian jets during the day.

4. The Syrians have admitted that Israeli forces made some advances today, but claim to have thrown them back during the afternoon.

5. The Israelis claim that they will soon have Mezzah airfield on the outskirts of Damascus within range of their 175 mm. self-propelled guns. This is not Damascus International Airport but another airfield close to the city.

6. There were reports that Iraqi forces in Syria had counterattacked Israeli troops, but nothing is known of the outcome. The Israelis claim that the Syrians are transferring tank units from the front line to a secondary defense line near Damascus, but there is no information to confirm this report. The Israelis further claim that Syria has exhausted its inventory of aircraft in the southern part of the country and is now deploying aircraft from northern Syria.

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No Objection to Declassification in Part 2011/02/28 : LOC-HAK-542-18-37-0

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EGYPTIAN FRONT

9. Fighting along the canal was still light as darkness fell, but Egyptian forces continued attempts to cross the Gulf of Suez during the evening.

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EGYPT

20. Muhammad Haykal, chief editor of the authoritative Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram, has joined in the call for using oil as a weapon to bring pressure against the US. Reacting to news reports that senior US officials were about to make decisions to help Israel militarily, Haykal warned in an Al Ahram article that the Arab oil states have the power to deny the US access to its interests in the Middle East.

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ISRAEL

22. The war has thus far cost Israel US \$2 billion, an Israeli official told the press today. The current rate of war-related expenditures, including replacement of aircraft, armor, and other equipment, is estimated at US \$240 million a day. Former armed forces chief of staff Rabin is in charge of fund raising activity to meet the costs of the war.

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